

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 003072

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/RSP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD -
ROBERT PALLADINO
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

1. Summary: While the Taipei dailies continued July 20 to focus their coverage on the aftermath of Typhoon Haitang and local politics, it is noteworthy to see that the pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's biggest daily, printed a banner headline on its front page that read: "United States joins hands with India to restrain China by lifting the ban on exports of nuclear technology to India." The centrist "China Times" approached the issue of the rise of China from a different angle -- it reported on its front page that China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) test-fired a revised version of the Dongfeng-15 short-range tactical missile last week, and that the PLA has moved its troops to Dongshan Island in preparation for its annual military exercises.

2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, several Chinese-language Taipei dailies editorialized on the new tasks facing new KMT Chairman-elect Ma Ying-jeou. Journalist Sun Yang-ming of the pro-unification "United Daily News," on the other hand, focused on U.S.-China-Taiwan relations. In his June 20 op-ed piece, Sung said KMT Chairman Lien Chan's trip to Beijing in April was, to a certain extent, facilitated by the Bush administration. End summary.

"To Ponder on [KMT Chairman] Lien Chan's Trip to Washington"

Journalist Sun Yang-ming noted in the "United Notes" column of the conservative, pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 600,000] (7/20):

". [KMT Chairman] Lien Chan's reputation reached a peak in Taiwan following his visit to Beijing in April; opinion surveys showed that Lien's approval rating was much higher even than that of President Chen Shui-bian's. But few people knew that Lien's Beijing trip was, to a certain extent, facilitated by the Bush administration.

"Washington has lately stopped using the so-called '3Cs' - 'Constructive, Candid, and Cooperative' - to describe its 'China policy' and has replaced them with the words 'hedge,' a word of uncertainty, or 'complex,' as used by [U.S. President George W.] Bush. Nonetheless, the United States remained as a proactive factor that pushed for Lien's trip to Beijing in April.

"When planning for his journey of peace to mainland China, Lien was once very hesitant [about whether to go on the trip or not] because he was very cautious about the possibility that the Chen Shui-bian administration might [seize the opportunity to] accuse him of being an ally of China. But Washington clearly indicated at that time that it was 'happy to see' Lien take his Beijing trip as planned. As a result, even though the Bian administration had attempted to [adopt the traditional method] by describing Lien's Beijing trip as a move to 'sell out Taiwan,' it was forced to put on the brake immediately afterwards. The U.S. attitude was precisely the main reason behind this [dramatic change].

"As a matter of fact, during the summit between Bush and his Chinese counterpart Hu Jintao last year, Bush clearly told Hu that he could meet with Taiwan's opposition parties first if the current situation did not allow him to talk with Chen. Certain U.S. influence was [obviously] involved behind the fact that Beijing was willing to meet with the chairmen of the KMT and PFP.

"What's more intriguing is [the fact] that in the wake of Lien's mainland trip, the United States and Lien started to bypass the Bian administration and work on plans for Lien's trip to Washington. Their original plan was to have Lien, as part of a non-stop effort, start his trip to Washington in June, but the trip was postponed due to U.S. factors.

"The positive evaluation given by Washington to Lien

following his Beijing trip, and Lien's planned follow-up trip to Washington, plus his planned meeting with Bush, are viewed, in reality, as moves by the United States to place pressure on the Bian administration's cross-Strait policy; they are also part of the United States' `one China policy.'

"Lien's Beijing trip has sparked a new wave of `mainland fever' in Taiwan. Some people in Beijing, based on this development, believe that in the foreseeable future, the United States will surely try to put on the brake on Taiwan's `mainland fever.' Nonetheless, Lien's trip to Washington this time has practically indicated that Washington has offered formal approval in public to Lien's Beijing trip. Such a development has indeed astonished many people.

"But following the development of the current situation, it is worth paying attention to see what the next step of the United States' Asia-Pacific/cross-Strait policy will be."

PAAL